



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**



**Indian Education Division**  
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## Pictograph Cave State Park Indian Education For All Lesson Plan

### Title

Pictograph Cave- The Rocks Tell a Story

### Content Area(s)

Art, Language Arts, Social Studies

### Grade level

4th Grade

### Duration

Two 50-minute periods

### Goals - Montana Standards/Essential Understandings

**ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1:** There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

**Social Studies Content Standard 4:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

**Speaking and Listening Content Standard 4:** Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.

**Reading Content Standard 5:** Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.

**Art Content Standard 3:** Students develop and refine arts skills and techniques to express ideas, pose and solve problems, and discover meaning.

**Art Content Standard 5:** Students understand the role of the Arts in society, diverse cultures, and historical periods.

### Overview

This lesson plan seeks to help students:

- Gain an understanding of what rock art is and why people made rock art.

- Gain knowledge of where rock art can be found.
- Be able to distinguish between petroglyphs and pictographs.
- Learn about the careless treatment of rock art sites and to preserve the remains of these ancient civilizations.
- Translate their images in a creative writing that will be attached to their artwork and then a class book will be made.

Students will also learn to:

- Appreciate and value the cultures and traditions of various peoples; and
- Appreciate and value Montana's diversity.

## Suggested Teaching Approaches

- Involve students in the planning of learning experiences about the Indian tribes of Montana. These planned experiences may include: the gathering of information about the native people of Montana, a visit to Pictograph Cave State Park to view the rock art, a visit to Chief Plenty Coups State Park, simulation activities, and role playing. Compose questions related to these topics. Make plans for accessing, organizing, and presenting information.
- Use of literature material, biographies of the local people, and oral histories is encouraged.
- Information may be organized and shared in a variety of ways, including: maps, graphs, charts, posters, pictures, dioramas, models, displays, interviews, and stories.

## Materials or Resources Needed

- Materials needed:
  - Coffee-stained brown paper bags
  - Sticks
  - Students' own hands
  - Black tempera paint
  - Crushed chalk (white, burnt sienna)
- Computers, Internet, Word Processing program
  - Internet access to the following websites.
    - [www.pictographcave.org](http://www.pictographcave.org) – access images from Pictograph cave
    - [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3951/is\\_200504/ai\\_n13602235/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3951/is_200504/ai_n13602235/print)
    - [www.fs.fed.us/r1/helena/resources/heritage\\_resources/prehistoric\\_rock\\_art.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/helena/resources/heritage_resources/prehistoric_rock_art.shtml)
    - [www.sacredland.org/endangered\\_sites\\_pages/weatherman\\_draw.html](http://www.sacredland.org/endangered_sites_pages/weatherman_draw.html)

## Extensions

Invite a tribal member from the Crow Tribe to your classroom to learn about tribal history.

### Suggested reading

- *From The Heart Of The Crow Country: The Crow Indians' Own Stories* (Library of the American Indian) - Joseph Medicine Crow
- *Pretty-Shield: Medicine Woman of the Crow* -Linderman, Frank Bird; Linderman, F.B.
- *The Crow (Indians of North America)* - Frederick E. Hoxie
- *Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows*, Linderman, F. (1983). 1962, University of Nebraska Press (available at many school and public libraries)

## Activities and Procedures

### Objective:

Students will create their own rock art pictograph using Native American images to communicate messages.

Read the following text to students and ask them to imagine. . .

You have been walking the backcountry of southern Montana. Along the way, you stop to pick up a rock that has caught your interest. You look at its color, feel its texture, then all of a sudden you drop the rock, because you have just gotten a glimpse of some tiny lavender flowers that have bloomed on top of a low growing cactus; the kind you wouldn't normally notice except for their added springtime color. As you continue on your hike, you decide to move closer to the sheer cut wall of striped colors and the small group of trees growing nearby. Once you reach the wall and push away some of the overgrown branches, you see figures of men behind shields and figures of other animals.

Questions begin to flood your mind:

- Who painted this?
- When was it painted?
- Why was it painted?
- What does it mean?
- What was used to paint it?

Throughout Montana, people have seen similar rock art images, with the most common being pictographs or painted images, and petroglyphs or images that are carved into rock surfaces. Most of the native tribes of Montana created rock art. One such site in southern Montana is Pictograph Cave, located within Pictograph Cave State Park. It is located southeast of Billings, Montana along the continuation of a sandstone cliff line that forms an impressive natural boundary and characterizes the valley. Two of the three caves that define the site complex contain evidence of habitation dating back over 4500 years ago. The pictographs that give the park its name date from over 2200 years ago (Billings Gazette 1995).

There are many reasons for making rock art: to convey important messages, to gain power in hunting, to provide calendars that marked important days, to protect the tribe, to use in religious ceremonies, to record events, and to educate the young. However, no matter the reason, rock art seems to have been used to communicate messages, the most prominent image being the handprint.

Native people would place their hand against the rock wall and blow paint through a hollow reed to make a dark area around the hand. Their handprint may have been used to distinguish who they were--similar to us signing our signature. Besides hollow reeds or bone, Indians painted with brushes made of chewed twigs, bones, or animal hair. For paints, they ground minerals--red ochre for red, manganese for brown, charcoal for black, and clay ochre for yellow--and mixed them with animal fat, honey, blood, or the whites of eggs.

Painted pictographs are always in serious danger of being destroyed due to their delicate nature. Animals, as well as people, have rubbed against the rocks removing part of its surface. Vandalism also plays a large role in the damage of pictographs and petroglyphs. And, while it is important for people to visit rock art, they should follow the rule, "Leave only footprints and take only photographs."

### Method of Creating

#### Day 1

- Using the brown paper, crumple, then smooth it out.
- Paint the brown paper with a thick mixture of instant coffee and water, let dry overnight.

#### Day 2

- Place hand on brown paper, using crushed charcoal or chalk, sprinkle around hand. Run slightly into paper around the hand. NOTE: To keep from smudging, lightly spray with a fixative in an open outside area and allow to dry thoroughly.
- Using the resource handout, paint your rock art images using black paint and a stick. Remember to cluster your images.
- Now translate your rock art images into a written form.
- Mat the rock art and the creative writing on a piece of 12 X 18 inch white paper. The finished product can now be displayed or bound into book form to create a class book.

Compare the students' work with the images from Pictograph Cave State Park.

- Have the students used simple shapes?
- Does their rock art tell a story?

**EVALUATION:**

Discussion/observation

Participation

Art exercise